

# Effectiveness of Fairy Tales in Conveying Its Moral Lesson: Analysis of Indonesian and Japanese Fairy Tales

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Abstract: This research seeks to discover the opinions or responses from mothers who have preschool children in relation to the moral lesson of children fairy tales as well as to ascertain whether conveying its moral through fairy tales is still relevant today. The selected data were fairy tales of Japanese and Indonesian origin. Based on the digital data investigation, two fairy tales were ranked as the most popular in each of their respective countries. The method used in this research were mixed methods, questionnaires, and qualitative analysis. The result of the research showed that in a story of fairy tales, both of Indonesian and Japanese origin, had moral lessons that are still relevant to teach to date.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the Government of Indonesia through Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education as well as Directorate General of Higher Education launched the National Reading Book Movement (*Gernasbaku*), i.e.: a movement that invites the participation from parents of kindergarten students to spend time reading books for their children. From this movement, the author recognized the importance of the books for children. One of reading books intended for children is fairy tales. As a reading intended for children, fairy tales are said to have a purpose, among others, to teach values and to shape the child's character. The importance of fairy tales was also introduced by Bruno Bettelheim, who thinks that the subtly need of Children moral education and, by the implication, only convey the advantages of moral behavior, not through the lens of abstract ethical concept but through that which seems tangibly right and therefore meaningful to them. The child finds this kind of meaning through fairy tales (Bruno, 2010).

A literate person is needed to read the story, especially in the case of preschool and kindergarten students who have not been able to read yet. In this condition, a mother plays an important role, that is to convey the message of fairy tales to her children. The importance of the role of a mother in reading the fairy tale stories for children is also mentioned

by Goto Soichiro. He argues that to raise a bright child who has the creative power of imagination, in the period prior to the age of 5-6 years, the mother should tell stories or read the stories for her children. Soichiro added the importance of a mother that reads stories and fairy tales to her children outweighs the importance of teaching Kimigayo song, Japanese national anthem (Goto, 2000).

This research seeks to discover opinions or responses of mothers who have preschool children (preschool and kindergartens students), about the moral lesson of fairy tales and whether they think fairy tales are still an applicable means of teaching moral values in children. The selected data were derived from Children tales of Japanese and Indonesian origin.

The advancement of this age in the digital era simplified the process of collecting data on websites and internet. Based on our digital data investigation, two fairy tales were ranked the most popular position in each of their respective countries, i.e.: "The Mouse Deer and The Crocodile (*Kancil dan Buaya*)" from Indonesia and "Peach Boy (*Momotaro*)" from Japan. Both were taken directly from the website, which can be accessed by anyone. Because the research target is Indonesian mothers, the Japanese folklore chosen from the website is also a fairy tale that has been translated into Indonesian.

## 2 METHOD

The Method used in this research were mixed methods using qualitative questionnaires and qualitative analysis. The data corpus chosen were Indonesian and Japanese children fairy tales. Prior to answering the questions, the respondents amounted to 50 people initially asked to read both of the fairy tales, those are “The Mouse Deer and The Crocodile (Indonesia)” and “Peach Boy (Japan)”. These tales were chosen for the reason that these fairy tales were the most famous in each of respective country. Meanwhile, the methods of research used were a questionnaire and qualitative method, by analyzing the answer result of the respondents to be made a conclusion.

## 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Fairy tales used for the data corpus in this research were “The Mouse Deer and The Crocodile” and “Peach Boy”. *Kancil dan Buaya* (The Mouse Deer and The Crocodile), which tells about a crocodile that has long wanted to eat the mouse deer, however, because the mouse deer is quick-witted, the crocodile has never captured it successfully. Even though the mouse deer always escaped from the crocodile’s pursuit, little by little the mouse deer grew concerned and on the alert. Because of it, the mouse deer moved from its home to another region to avoid the crocodile. However, the crocodile successfully found the mouse deer. The crocodile also learned that the mouse deer cross the river by hopping on the river stones every day. The crocodile then disguised itself as a stone. However, owing to the mouse deer’s wit, the mouse deer realized that it was only a crocodile’s trap to catch the mouse deer. However, using its clever wit, the mouse deer can outwit the crocodile. The crocodile was surprised, apparently, its disguise had been uncovered. It then realized that it has been outwitted. The crocodile was really upset with its own stupidity.

The other fairy tale is Peach Boy (*Momotaro*), which tells a story about a grandfather and a grandmother that doesn’t have any child. One day, the grandmother was out to wash the laundry in the river, and she found a big peach fruit. Emerging from inside, a baby appeared, which then named Momotaro. The village that the old couple was living in often disturbed by monsters, that is why Momotaro determined to go to the devil’s island (*Onigashima*) to eradicate the monsters. With help

from the animals he encountered along the way to Onigashima, at last Momotaro managed to kill all the monsters so that the village becomes peaceful. From those two fairy tales, respondents were initially asked to read, then to answer some questions.

### 3.1 On First Question: Do You Think That This Fairy Tale Entitled the Mouse Deer and the Crocodile, as Well as Momotaro, Contains a Moral Message?

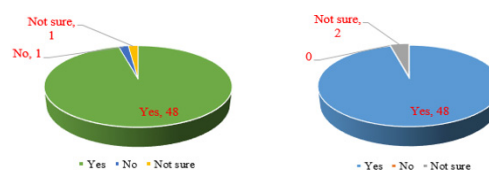


Figure 1: Moral message of mouse deer & crocodile story. Figure 2: Moral message of peach boy story.

From figure 1 and 2, it is visible that 48 respondents agree that in both the fairy tales contains a moral message. Even though there are some answers ‘no’ and ‘not sure’, but the portion is very small. In line with Courtney’s opinion that children’s literature can also be used to teach a variety of lessons, morals, and ideas (Courtney, 2012), respondents agree that fairy tale contain a moral message.

### 3.2 On Second Question: What Moral Message Do You Get from These Fairy Tales?

Based on the nature reader- response theory, it is believed that reader as the ones that shape and become the core source of learning a particular literary text. Tompkins in (Trisnawati, 2009) has explained, the procedure involves the following terms, i.e.: the readers, the reading process and the responses to mark out an area for investigation of a literary work. It means that placing readers as the focus of analysis must include their responses to the literary work after they finish their reading process on that literary work. Thus the responses given by readers are seen as a product of a new creation regarding the text which they have read so that later it may become the interpretation of the single text.

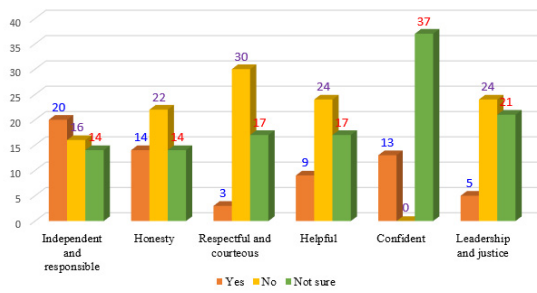


Figure 3: Moral message content of the mouse deer and crocodile story.

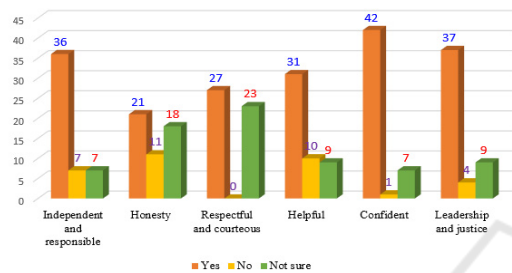


Figure 4: Moral message content of peach boy story.

Figure 3 and figure 4 shows that the moral message contains in the story of Momotaro (Peach boy), is considered better compared to the story of “Mouse Deer and The Crocodile”. A story is considered good when the content of the story also contains a virtuous moral message for the character development of the child. According to advocates of traditional character education, reading virtuous stories is one of the pillars of moral education (Darcia, 2002).

### 3.3 On Third Question: Is a Fairy Tale an Effective Tool in Conveying a Moral Message?

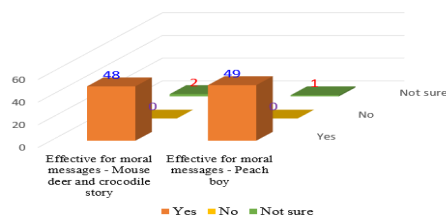


Figure 5 shows the confidence of 48 respondents from the story “The Mouse Deer and The Crocodile” and 49 respondents from the story “Momotaro (Peach boy)” who consider that fairy tales are still an effective means in conveying moral messages.

The benefits of using children’s literature to teach values are also stated by Prestwich. According to

him, literature can be a good way to teach character education because literature lends itself to the teaching of specific moral dilemmas and the examining of specific character traits (Prestwich, 2004). Why are fairy tales still considered as an effective means of instilling values? I think it is because fairy tales have many stories that are sad, interesting, frightening, or exciting. It can be said that fairy tales have the ability to pique someone’s interest.

## 4 CONCLUSION

There are a number of ways that one might morally educate a child. One might tell the child stories with moral lessons in order to elicit the favorable behavior and to discourage unfavorable behavior.

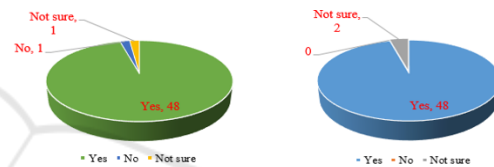


Figure 6.

From the data of respondents, fairy tales are still believed to be an effective means to convey moral messages to children and mothers have an important role to deliver the moral messages through fairy tales to their children. Mothers play an important role in helping children to understand the story and capture the message of the story.

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